

Borderland Saturday, February 19, 2005

Wanted fugitives run for the border

Line is lure for suspects

*Daniel Borunda
El Paso Times*

For years, criminals seeking to evade the law have escaped into other countries. Fugitives find such escape easy in El Paso and Juárez, where that other country is right next door.

In this week alone, authorities in El Paso and Juárez captured two alleged killers and a convicted New Jersey sex offender believed to have traveled with a 16-year-old New York girl to Mexico.

Last month, the El Paso County Sheriff's Department launched an international search for a Fabens man who was wanted for allegedly shooting his wife. Two weeks after the Jan. 4 shooting, Daniel Porras, 41, walked into the Downtown El Paso County Jail and surrendered, saying he was tired of running.

Monday, another man was turned over to Mexican authorities after he reportedly hid in El Paso for the past 2 1/2 years. The Southwest Fugitive Task Force arrested Mauro Carreón Rodríguez, 65, after finding him at the Sundance Apartments, 7133 N. Mesa in West El Paso, the service said. He was wanted for allegedly shooting his girlfriend in her Juárez home in 2002.

The cases are examples of the U.S.-Mexico border's continuing challenge to law enforcement and its lure to modern-day desperados seeking to escape the law in either country, law enforcement officials said.

"The legend (of the border) still exists," said Rick Glancey, spokesman for the El Paso County Sheriff's Department.

"A lot of times we will (also) get other communities'

Julio Ramos, 27 Alleged gang member wanted by the FBI for an alleged fatal shooting of a rival in Georgia in 2002. Tips recently received in Atlanta said he may be in the El Paso area.

Peter Calzada, 45 A former El Paso County sheriff's deputy who disappeared in 2003 before being sentenced for raping a woman while on patrol. He is believed to be in northern Chihuahua state, Mexico.

Jorge Luis "Jay" Lopez, 32 A Texas native believed to be in Juárez trying to avoid a charge of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.

Peter McDonald Jr., 29 A self-described satanic priest believed to be in Juárez. He is wanted on a bond revocation stemming from a bank-fraud charge.

Oscar Porras Chavira, 33 A Juárez dentist wanted by the FBI for allegedly kidnapping and raping an El Paso woman he lured across the border.

Jorge Cardona Provencio, 46 Believed to be in a Mexican town opposite Fabens. He is wanted on a bond revocation for a charge

fugitives because they are trying to exit the United States, and I-10 is a major corridor," Glancey said.

Twenty-one fugitives, including 10 homicide suspects, were deported to their native Mexico from El Paso last year, said U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials.

"We are very busy. El Paso (FBI) division is extremely busy with fugitive leads from offices throughout the country," said Special Agent Art Werge. For example, the FBI issued an alert two weeks ago for alleged killer Julio Ramos, a 27-year-old alleged gang member from Georgia thought to be in the El Paso-Juárez region.

The Southwest Fugitive Task Force deals with about 1,600 men and women wanted on federal felony warrants, said Payan, who described the El Paso region as busier in terms of fugitives than similar-size cities away from the border.

"If it is a U.S. citizen, it becomes a pretty simple matter. ... If it is a Mexican citizen, it becomes a very difficult situation because of their laws and protections afforded to Mexican citizens," Werge said. "Generally, it goes to a fairly lengthy (extradition) process."

Mexico bans the extradition of suspects who might face the death penalty, but its laws allow its citizens charged with crimes abroad to be tried in and serve time in Mexico.

Improvements have been made over the years as the two countries work together, law enforcement officials said.

Background checks since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks have led to the capture of an average of 100 people with outstanding warrants monthly as they try to cross international bridges into El Paso, said Roger Maier, spokesman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Cooperation has improved with Mexico, U.S. federal agents said. The Mexican attorney general's office has a liaison in El Paso. El Paso police have had a Mexico liaison for years. And in 2003, the U.S. Marshals Service opened a foreign field office in Mexico City.

of possession with intent to distribute marijuana.

Fugitives captured

Law enforcement agents in El Paso and Juárez frequently encounter fugitives from other cities. Some cases in recent years:

- **Edwin Fontanez**, wanted on a murder warrant in Chicago, was found Monday by Border Patrol agents among a group of undocumented migrants in the Lower Valley.
- **Tennessee prison escapee** Edward McDaniel, who was serving a sentence for shooting a sheriff's deputy, and Vickie Lynn Sanford, a guard who allegedly helped him escape, were captured at a West Side hotel in October.
- **Darryl Alphonzo Wilson**, wanted in a fatal stabbing in Baltimore, was arrested in West El Paso by the Southwest Fugitive Task Force in August.
- **Manuel Tarango Jr.**, an alleged Las Vegas gang member known as "Demon" and wanted for allegedly killing an off-duty police

But the U.S.-Mexico border is likely to continue to attract people seeking to escape the law.

"It remains something you see all the time," Werge of the FBI said. "Juárez is a city of an estimated of 2 million people, and it's very easy to hide."

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officer during a robbery, was handed over in June by Mexican authorities to FBI agents in El Paso.

- **Bobby Ray Jones**, wanted for allegedly killing a man in Oklahoma City in a fight over a woman, was captured by Juárez police in January 2004.

- **Felipe de Jesús Machado Reyes**, a Juárez man accused of executing his wife, her cousin and a girlfriend in Juárez, was captured by an El Paso police SWAT team at a Lower Valley apartment in July 2003.

- **Ramon Enriquez Chavez** of Albuquerque was captured June 2003 when a Border Patrol agent recognized him as he pumped gasoline in South El Paso. Chavez had allegedly fatally shot his wife hours earlier in Albuquerque and was on his way to Mexico.

Source: El Paso Times archives.

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